DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 449 660 FL 026 546

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TITLE	American Sign Language Instruction: Moving from Protest to Practice.
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	26p.; Paper also appeared in Northeast Conference Review, Volume 48, Fall 2000.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*American Sign Language; Curriculum Development; Deafness; Elementary Secondary Education; *Graduation Requirements; Higher Education; *Required Courses; Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; *State Curriculum Guides; *Teacher Qualifications
IDENTIFIERS	*Virginia

ABSTRACT

Many educational institutions have already determined that American Sign Language (ASL) is indeed a language, that it has a culture, and it is sufficiently foreign to fulfill a foreign language requirement. Consequently, schools and universities struggle to place ASL in the context of academic foreign language programs. The challenge is to develop state curriculum frameworks, local curricula, and teacher licensure requirements that establish ASL as a viable contender among its academic counterparts. This article describes the steps that have been taken in Virginia to allow ASL to fulfill the foreign language requirement for an advanced studies diploma, including the development of state curriculum framework and teacher licensure requirements. The article provides a historical background of ASL in American education, including a summary of ASL and the foreign language model, ASL and the national standards for foreign language learning, applying national standards to ASL instruction, the Virginia framework for instruction of ASL, and teacher licensure requirements in Virginia. Twelve references are included, as are two appendices, Framework for Instruction of American Sign Language in Virginia Public Schools, March 1998 and Proposed Amendment to Licensure Regulations for School Personnel. (KFT)

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ED 449 660

American Sign Language Instruction: Moving from Protest to Practice

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Introduction

Is American Sign Language (ASL) really a language? Does it have a culture? Is it "foreign"? These questions continue to be discussed as schools and universities struggle to place ASL in the context of academic foreign language programs. For many educational institutions, however, the decision to allow ASL to fulfill a foreign language requirement has already been made, so continued debate on those issues is useless. Instead, the challenge is to develop state curriculum frameworks, local curricula, and teacher licensure requirements that establish ASL as a viable contender among its academic counterparts. This article describes the steps that have been taken in Virginia to allow ASL to fulfill the foreign language requirement for an advanced studies diploma, including the development of a state curriculum framework and teacher licensure requirements.

An Historical Perspective

The story began in 1989, when a Superintendent's Memorandum established that high school credits earned in ASL would partially satisfy the foreign language requirements in Virginia for the advanced studies diploma (Virginia Department of

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Education, 1989). The foreign language requirement for that diploma remains the same today as it was then: either two years of two different languages or three years of one language. At the time, there was little, if any, criticism from the field. ASL was not widely offered, and even where it did exist, there was no consideration of a third level of instruction. Thus, a student would still have to study at least two years of a second language because ASL could not completely satisfy the requirement.

On the national scene, in April 1990, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) Executive Council passed motions that recognized that ASL was "a complete system of communication that offer[ed] an entrée to a separate cultural experience with its own literary tradition. More specifically, ASL [was] recognized to have grammatical, structural, and linguistic elements different from those of any spoken language, including American English" (ACTFL supports ASL, 1991, p. 3). The motions that were passed included:

> A motion urging that ACTFL encourage institutions to recognize ASL as a legitimate fulfillment of a language requirement. It was specified that this does not include a manual version of English (manually coded English – MCE) nor pidgin sign English (PSE).
>
> A motion that ACTFL support the need expressed by professionals in ASL for pre-service and continuing education on the issues of licensing and professional standards in ASL. (ACTFL supports ASL, 1991, p. 3)

In 1996, the American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA) applied to the Joint National Committee on Languages and the National Council for Languages and International Studies (JNCL-NCLIS) for membership (Joint Committee, 1996). Today, ASLTA is a recognized member of JNCL-NCLIS with voting membership at the annual Delegate Assembly.

Also in 1996, during its legislative session, the General Assembly of Virginia passed a resolution urging public schools and public and private institutions of higher education in Virginia to recognize ASL course work for foreign language credit. As directed by the resolution, the Virginia Department of Education transmitted a copy of the resolution to all local school boards (Virginia Department of Education, 1996). In the year that followed, however, the resolution had little discernible impact on the acceptance of ASL as a foreign language by Virginia's schools and universities, and ASL remained a very small part of foreign language programs within the Commonwealth.

By 1997, the ASL issue was becoming more visible. Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools wrote a letter in support of any steps that the Virginia Department of Education might take in allowing ASL to satisfy the complete foreign language requirement for the advanced studies diploma. Correspondence from smaller school divisions indicated that some administrators had introduced ASL into their curricula without input from instructional personnel. Instructional specialists in

these divisions were seeking assistance as they strove to implement ASL programs after the fact. Several e-mail exchanges with other state foreign language supervisors indicated growing concerns about the status of ASL as a foreign language. Those concerns included 1) whether or not ASL was really a foreign language, 2) its impact on enrollments in other traditional foreign languages, and 3) how school divisions would find qualified teachers and acceptable instructional materials.

In January 1998, the Virginia Board of Education received a status report on ASL instruction in the state. It also requested the development of a recommended scope and sequence for three years of ASL instruction, as well as recommendations for teacher licensure requirements. The Virginia Department of Education convened a task force to develop a curriculum framework for three years of American Sign Language instruction at the secondary level. The task force included teachers of American Sign Language from Virginia school divisions, representatives from the foreign language community (including the Foreign Language Association of Virginia, FLAVA), representatives from the Virginia Community College System and from higher education, and from the American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA). Three individuals who served on the task force were deaf.

In March 1998, the Virginia Board of Education gave final approval to the *Framework for Instruction in American Sign Language in Virginia Public Schools.* It also announced in a Superintendent's Memorandum (Virginia Department of Education, 1998b) the approval of three years of instruction in American Sign Language to satisfy the complete foreign language requirement for the advanced studies diploma, as long as the courses used to satisfy this requirement followed the approved curriculum. An important caveat of the Superintendent's Memorandum was the following:

> Local school divisions must make clear to parents and students that some, but not all, colleges and universities accept ASL for foreign language credit. Parents and students should be advised to find out if ASL is accepted at the college or university for which admission is sought. School divisions offering three years of instruction in American Sign Language should include this information in all course of study documents.

In the same memorandum, the Board also approved the development of requirements for the licensure of teachers of ASL. Currently, these requirements are undergoing public comment. Until the requirements go into effect, the only requirement for an ASL teacher in Virginia is that he or she must hold a license to teach in any of the endorsement areas currently approved for the Commonwealth.

ASL and the Foreign Language Model

As a relative newcomer to the Virginia Department of Education, this author did not participate in the philosophical and political struggles that led to the

acceptance of ASL as a foreign language. The curriculum framework was also well on its way to distribution prior to her arrival. However, the author did participate in the development of the teacher licensure requirements for the Commonwealth and in the dissemination of information to school divisions and institutions of higher learning once the framework had been approved. In her current position as principal specialist for foreign languages and ESL, she interprets policy and assists school divisions with the implementation of their foreign language programs, including ASL. One might wonder, then, how a curriculum specialist with a firm background in foreign language education and limited exposure to ASL instruction, is able to support the concept of allowing ASL to fulfill a foreign language requirement.

ASL and the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning

The most forceful argument for acceptance of the *Framework for Instruction of American Sign Language in Virginia's Public Schools* is that it is organized upon the same principles as the national standards for foreign language learning (National Standards, 1999). One of the tenets of the National Standards Project (1999, p. 11) says that:

> To study another language and culture gives one the powerful key to successful communication: *knowing how, when, and why, to say what to whom. . . .* The approach to second language instruction found in today's schools is designed to facilitate genuine interaction with others, whether they are on another continent, across town, or within the neighborhood.

These statements help answer the questions presented in the introduction of this article. Knowledge of American Sign Language is a powerful key to successful communication and facilitates genuine interaction with members of the Deaf community, regardless of where they are located. Not only is their language different from English, but there is a definite Deaf culture that is different from aspects of the traditional "American" culture.

In a reflective essay on the role of ASL in American education, Lennard J. Davis (1998), who learned ASL before learning English as the child of deaf parents, points out that proponents of "real" foreign languages advocate travel to other countries to learn about other cultures and to broaden their horizons. He wonders why travel must be across oceans or borders to expand the mind, noting that students of classical Latin, Greek, or Hebrew simply travel back in time and in imagination to study their foreign languages, not to existing countries where the language is used. And American Indian languages are acknowledged foreign languages at some universities, yet they are spoken right here in the United States. Just as there are "lands" where these languages are or were used, so, too, is there the "land of the Deaf."

Applying the National Standards to American Sign Language Instruction

The five organizing principles or goal areas of the national standards (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999) have been widely accepted by foreign language educators across the United States and lend themselves well to American Sign Language instruction:

- Communication: Communicate in Languages Other Than English
- Cultures: Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures
- Connections: Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information
- Comparisons: Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture
- Communities: Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home and Around the World.

Communication. The organizing principles of the national standards (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999) no longer separate language skills as discrete elements. Rather, all of the elements are integrated into the whole process of language learning--which includes learning ASL. Further, the delineation of the communication goal into three modes is very applicable to communication in American Sign Language:

- Interpersonal: direct communication between individuals who are in personal contact, *e.g.*, conversational and written exchanges

- Interpretive: receptive communication of a message where the creator of the message is absent, *e.g.*, understanding movies, theatre productions, and television broadcasts of speeches, as well as written communications.
- Presentational: communication for individuals (an audience) with whom there is no immediate personal contact, *e.g.*, making speeches and preparing written presentations.

Culture and Literature. The concept of the existence of a Deaf culture is one that is often debated when discussing the role of ASL as a foreign language. However, when one applies the definition of culture as the practices, perspectives, and products of the culture studied as it is defined in the national standards, it is easy to apply this concept to ASL. Certainly, native users of ASL often demonstrate social practices, hold philosophical perspectives, and have developed various products that are not understood or embraced by those who do not use ASL.

Referring to a body of Deaf literature, Davis (1998) vividly describes the animated ASL poetry that may be "flung" from the hands of performers in the Flying Words Project, the "high comedy and tragedy of deaf storytelling, with its full palette of human colors and emotions", and the "lithe and sexy version of ska, grunge, punk, or new-age music rendered in sign and dance" by deaf students

(Davis, 1998). As noted in the Virginia framework, the primary genres of Deaf literature are storytelling, folklore, poetry, and drama.

Language Structure. Just as the question "Where is the grammar?" often arises as foreign language teachers look at the national standards, so it echoes in the consideration of ASL as a foreign language. However, vocabulary and grammar instruction are not lost when introducing ASL into the world of foreign languages. Rather, they are taught in context, with structure and syntax serving as the "grammar" of American Sign Language. Indeed, one of the proposed requirements for an individual to obtain a teaching license in ASL in Virginia is an understanding of the application of basic concepts of phonology (e.g., handshapes, types of signs, orientation on the body, sign movements), syntax, and morphology to the teaching of the American Sign Language. Certainly, introducing these concepts to students would be expected as part of an ASL course.

The Virginia Framework for Instruction of American Sign Language

In Virginia, the question is no longer whether or not ASL can fulfill the foreign language requirement for an advanced studies diploma. The challenge is to ensure that ASL courses are as academically rigorous and as pedagogically sound as courses taught in other foreign languages. Most proponents of ASL are eager to rise to these challenges, but admittedly, it will fall to schools and school divisions

actually to monitor the quality of their ASL programs. One of the best ways to ensure the rigor of ASL courses is to develop a standards-based curriculum. Foreign language educators have been advocating such curricula for almost a decade now. The application of the national standards (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999) and strategies and techniques that are embedded in proficiency-based language instruction should lead to strong ASL programs, just as they have led to strong programs in more traditional foreign languages.

In developing the *Framework for Instruction in American Sign Language in Virginia's Public Schools* (Virginia Department of Education, 1998a), the task force found the national standards very adaptable to ASL instruction. The principles and progress indicators for the three-year course of study in American Sign Language in Virginia are included in Appendix A of this article, and readers will note a definite alignment of the framework with the national standards. It is rather ironic that in the flurry to develop curriculum frameworks for foreign language study around our nation, the framework for American Sign Language instruction was completed and approved in Virginia even before a revision of the standards of learning for the more traditional foreign languages was undertaken.

As with any state framework, it is important to understand the general nature of the standards and progress indicators for each level of study. In Virginia, where

much curricular authority is granted to the local school divisions, the intent is to provide a framework in which local divisions may develop more specific curricula that meet the needs of their students and communities.

A closer examination of the ASL framework will reveal that there are many parallels between the study of American Sign Language and more traditional foreign languages. Clearly, the key to widespread acceptance of ASL as an academic subject will be the maintenance of the rigor of the curriculum, coupled with the preparation and skill of those who teach the subject. Responsibilities in these two areas will fall largely to the school divisions that opt to include ASL in their programs of studies.

Teacher Licensure Requirements for American Sign Language

Just as native speakers of a foreign language are not automatically granted a license to teach that language, native users of American Sign Language will not automatically qualify as ASL teachers in Virginia. As mentioned earlier, in the absence of teacher licensure requirements for ASL, the only requirement to teach ASL in Virginia has been that the individual must have a license to teach (any subject or grade level) in the Commonwealth. However, as part of policies established by the Board of Education in 1998, teacher licensure requirements for ASL teachers have been developed. On June 22, 2000, the Virginia Board of Education opened a 60-day public comment period on the ASL teacher licensure

requirements. Further action will be taken at the close of the comment period. It is anticipated that eventually all ASL teachers, current or future, will be required to meet the licensure requirements.

Great efforts were made to establish the same rigor in American Sign Language courses as in courses in more traditional foreign languages. Likewise, steps were also taken to ensure that ASL teachers have a rigorous academic preparation that matches that of other foreign language professionals. In addition to demonstrating proficiency in the use and comprehension of ASL, prospective ASL teachers are required to demonstrate knowledge of the history, social structure, and artistic and literary contributions of the Deaf culture, as well as an ability to interpret contemporary lifestyles, customs, and cultural patterns of the culture. They must also be well versed in the national standards for foreign language learning (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999) and current proficiency-based objectives of the teaching of foreign languages at the elementary and secondary levels. They must have training in the assessment of foreign language skills and in the use of media in teaching languages. They must have an understanding of current curricular developments in foreign language education, as well as of the relationship of language study to other areas of the curriculum. Finally, like all teachers in the state, they must demonstrate an understanding of, and proficiency in, English grammar, usage, and

mechanics and their integration in writing. There are also alternative licensure requirements for ASL users who may not have learned ASL by completing a college or university degree program. All candidates must complete a foreign language teaching methodology course. The complete proposed licensure requirements for ASL teachers in Virginia are included in Appendix B of this article.

Conclusion

It would be naïve to ignore the fact that American Sign Language is a "language other than English" that is used by a recognized group of individuals for daily and essential communication. Certainly the Deaf communities are as visible, if not as audible, as many other non-English-speaking communities that are so well established in our country. Although the exact number of persons using American Sign Language is unknown, Padden and Humphries estimated in 1988 that as many as 500,000 individuals used ASL.

A 1997 survey of elementary and secondary public and private schools by the Center for Applied Linguistics indicated that "sign language" was taught in two per cent of the schools responding to the survey. It placed behind Japanese, Italian, and Russian, but before Chinese, Greek, and Hebrew in languages taught by the schools. In an informal survey conducted by this author in 1998, American Sign Language was the fifth most taught language in the Virginia, after Spanish, French,

Latin, and German, having surpassed Japanese, which is widely available to students through distance learning. The Joint National Committee on Languages (JNCL) (1997) reported that 21 of 40 states responding to its survey considered ASL to be a foreign language while 12 states did not, and five states allowed school districts to make the decision.

It is important to note that while almost half the states accept ASL credits to satisfy high school foreign language requirements, relatively few colleges and universities allow the substitution of ASL for more traditional foreign languages for entrance requirements. Thus, it is imperative that school districts inform students and parents of this fact when they advertise ASL courses to their constituencies, as Virginia school divisions are required to do. Perhaps one of the most recognized lists of colleges and universities that accept American Sign Language courses is maintained on the Internet by Dr. Sherman Wilcox at the University of New Mexico. However, he acknowledges on this Web page that "the type of acceptance of ASL can vary greatly from school to school. Some institutions have formal policies accepting ASL in fulfillment of the foreign language requirement. Others accept ASL only within certain colleges, divisions, or departments. Still others may accept ASL on an ad hoc basis for certain majors" (Wilcox, 1999).

It is important to note that even though the Virginia Department of Education has taken steps to establish a curriculum framework for ASL and licensure requirements for ASL teachers, animated discussion within the state endures. School divisions continue to struggle to develop local curricula, locate appropriate teaching materials, and hire qualified ASL teachers. Teachers of other foreign languages are concerned about their own enrollments as ASL enrollments increase across the state. And the impact of ASL on students entering colleges both within and outside the state remains to be seen.

Clearly, the debate of whether or not American Sign Language is a foreign language will continue in the years to come. However, for institutions where the decision has already been made, it is time to move beyond discussion of whether or not to include ASL as a foreign language, and to devote that time and energy to developing ways in which the best practices in foreign language teaching can be applied to the subject. In Virginia, the ASL curriculum framework and teacher licensure requirements serve as a foundation that provides the opportunity to establish American Sign Language as an academic and rigorous addition to the public school curriculum.

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Appendix A

Framework for Instruction of American Sign Language in Virginia's Public Schools March 1998

The framework is available on the Internet at: http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/signlang.html
This excerpt does not include the full document. For a hard copy of the complete framework, please contact Dr. Linda Wallinger, principal specialist for foreign languages and ESL, Virginia Department of Education, at lwalling@pen.k12.va.us or (804) 225-2593 or Dr. Lissa Power-deFur, associate director of special education, Virginia Department of Education, at lpower-d@mail.vak12ed.edu or (804) 225-2818.

COMMUNICATION: Communicating in American Sign Language

Standard 1.1 **Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions. (interpersonal mode)**

Progress Indicators, Year 1
- Students ask and answer questions about family, school events, and celebrations.
- Students share likes and dislikes with each other and the class.
- Students exchange essential information such as making introductions, leave-taking, getting attention, and negotiating the signing environment using appropriate non-manual behaviors (i.e., facial expression, body posture, spatial organization).
- Students follow and give simple directions and instructions.

Progress Indicators, Year 2
- Students ask and respond to questions for clarification.
- Students express opinions and preferences regarding personal and school events and experiences.
- Students develop and propose solutions to issues and problems related to the school or community through group work.

Progress Indicators, Year 3
- Students discuss, in American Sign Language, current or past events that are of significance in the Deaf culture or being studied in another subject.
- Students develop and propose solutions to issues and problems that are of concern to members of their own culture and to members of the Deaf culture.
- Students exchange, support, and discuss their opinions and individual perspectives with peers on a variety of topics.
- Students recognize communication breakdowns and request or provide repair.

Standard 1.2 **Students understand and interpret American Sign Language on a variety of topics. (interpretive mode)**

Progress Indicators, Year 1
- Students comprehend main ideas in appropriate signed narratives such as personal anecdotes or narratives based on familiar themes, in person or via videotape.
- Students identify people and objects in their environment or from other school subjects, based on signed descriptions.
- Students follow signed directions regarding familiar locations.

Progress Indicators, Year 2
- Students understand announcements and messages connected to daily activities at school or in the Deaf culture.
- Students understand the main themes and significant details on topics and products from other classes or from Deaf culture as presented on television, video, or live presentations.
- Students comprehend the principal characters, main ideas, and themes in selected literary presentations (e.g., storytelling, folklore, poetry, and drama).
- Students use knowledge acquired in other settings and from other subject areas to comprehend messages in American Sign Language.

Progress Indicators, Year 3
- Students understand main ideas and significant details of discussions, lectures and presentations on current or past events of Deaf culture or of subjects studied in other classes.

- Students analyze the main plot, characterization, and setting in authentic American Sign Language literature (e.g., storytelling, folklore, poetry, and drama).
- Students demonstrate increasing understanding of the cultural nuances of meaning in signed language as expressed in formal and informal settings.
- Students demonstrate increasing understanding of the cultural nuances of meaning in expressive products of Deaf culture, including selections from various literary genres and visual arts (e.g., storytelling, folklore, poetry, and drama).

Standard 1.3 **Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics. (presentational mode)**

Progress Indicators, Year 1
- Students prepare stories about activities or events in their environments and share these stories with an audience.
- Students dramatize stories and anecdotes commonly known by members of the Deaf community (e.g., ABC Stories).
- Students tell or retell stories and give messages in American Sign Language.

Progress Indicators, Year 2
- Students present short plays or skits, poetry, and anecdotes to share with school peers or groups via live performance or videotape.
- Students prepare stories about school or personal experiences or events to share with peers and members of the Deaf community.
- Students prepare class presentations or reports on personal experiences, other school subjects, or current events.

Progress Indicators, Year 3
- Students debate a topic with classmates.
- Students perform cultural arts events commonly enjoyed by members of the Deaf community (e.g., scenes from plays, poetry, excerpts from short stories).
- Students select and analyze expressive products from the literary genres of American Sign Language (e.g., storytelling, folklore, poetry, and drama).
- Students perform a play or poem connected to a topic from another subject area.
- Students create stories, short plays, or poetry based on themes, ideas, or perspectives of the Deaf community.
- Students prepare and present a research-based analysis of a current event from the perspective of both the Deaf culture and their own culture.

CULTURE: Knowledge of the cultural context in which American Sign Language occurs

Standard 2.1 **Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between practices and perspectives of Deaf culture.**

Progress Indicators, Year 1
- Students demonstrate an understanding of American Sign Language as indigenous to Deaf culture.
- Students observe, identify, discuss, and use simple patterns of behavior for interacting in various settings.
- Students observe, identify, discuss, and use appropriate communication for greeting and leave-taking, attention getting, and use of names (i.e., name signs).
- Students observe and discuss the historical and current role of technology in the Deaf culture.
- Students demonstrate awareness of Deaf heritage and identify major historical events and persons.

Progress Indicators, Year 2
- Student use appropriate communication in daily activities among peers and adults.
- Students discuss and analyze common beliefs and attitudes among members of the Deaf community.
- Students identify the members of the Deaf community and its hierarchy and demonstrate knowledge of communication differences within the Deaf community.
- Students identify and learn about the role of organizations of the Deaf.

Progress Indicators, Year 3
- Students discuss and analyze the diversity of beliefs, attitudes, and mores within the Deaf community.
- Students identify, analyze, and discuss various patterns of behavior and interaction typical of the Deaf culture.
- Students identify, examine, and discuss connections between the perspectives of the Deaf culture and socially approved behavior patterns.

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Standard 2.2 **Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the Deaf culture.**

Progress Indicators, Year 1

- Students recognize the early existence of American Sign Language in the United States and foreign influences on its etymological development.
- Students identify the various historical beliefs about deafness (e.g., education, listening devices).
- Students identify and discuss the contributions made by linguists who have studied American Sign Language.
- Students recognize themes, ideas, or perspectives of the Deaf culture.

Progress Indicators, Year 2

- Students analyze the influence of other signed languages and cultures of the world on American Sign Language.
- Students research and learn about humor, literature, and cultural arts of the Deaf community.
- Students recognize and describe Deaf heritage by identifying the contributions made by people who are deaf in all aspects of life.
- Students analyze and compare opinions regarding American Sign Language as a language.

Progress Indicators, Year 3

- Students identify and analyze social, economic, legislative, and institutional issues that affect and have affected the Deaf community, to include the role of organizations of the Deaf with respect to these issues.
- Students will research and analyze Deaf heritage as it relates to humor and the cultural arts.

CONNECTIONS: Providing connections to additional bodies of knowledge

Standard 3.1 **Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through their knowledge of and skills in using American Sign Language.**

Progress Indicators: Year 1

- Students demonstrate understanding of concepts learned in other subject areas in American Sign Language (e.g., mathematics: number concepts, time and measurement, story problems; health: physical characteristics)
- Students identify the use of technology to access and exchange information with and within the Deaf community (e.g., captioning/decoding devices, TTYs and text telephones, listening systems, real-time graphic displays).
- Students demonstrate an awareness of print and non-print resources for deafness, the Deaf and American Sign Language, and other sign system (e.g., sign language CD-ROM dictionaries, books by deaf authors, books about the Deaf).

Progress Indicators: Year 2

- Students discuss topics from other subject areas in American Sign Language (e.g., geographical terms and concepts, literature, geometry, drama, and dance).
- Students use technology to access and exchange information with and within the Deaf community (e.g., closed captioning, text telephones, relay services).
- Students expand their knowledge of print and non-print resources on deafness, the Deaf, and American Sign Language to gather information (e.g., Web sites for Deaf associations, Deaf businesses, professional agencies and associations).

Progress Indicators: Year 3

- Students discuss topics from other subject areas and acquire information about the topic by using American Sign Language (e.g., government, civics, health).
- Students project future technological advances that affect the Deaf, deafness, and American Sign Language (e.g., drive-through windows, viewer phones, rear-view captioning).
- Students use their knowledge and access of print and non-print resources on deafness, the Deaf, and American Sign Language to research Deaf perspectives on issues (e.g., Web sites that offer signed languages outside the United States, videotape series).

Standard 3.2 **Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through American Sign Language and its cultures.**

Progress Indicators: Year 1

- Students gain an understanding of concepts that are unique to the Deaf community and their implications for language learning (e.g., hearing of hearing, hearing of deaf, deaf or hearing, deaf of deaf, and hard of hearing).
- Students become aware of the perspective of the Deaf culture by reading or viewing publications or presentations.

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Progress Indicators: Year 2

- Students identify issues from different perspectives of members of the Deaf culture (e.g., using topics found in Deaf publications such as NAD Broadcaster, the "Deaf President Now" movement, state and federal legislation).

Progress Indicators: Year 3

- Students use their knowledge of diversity within the Deaf culture and their knowledge of American Sign Language to assume different points of view (e.g., class presentations, debates, role plays).

COMPARISONS: Comparing and contrasting American Sign Language with student's own language

Standard 4.1 Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of American Sign Language and their own language.

Progress Indicators: Year 1

- Students recognize differences and similarities between auditory languages and the visual/conceptual of American Sign Language, including homophones, manual babbling.
- Students compare the inflections used to communicate questions, negatives, and statements in American Sign Language with the inflectional patterns used in the students' own language.
- Students identify elements of American Sign Language phonology (e.g., handshapes, type of signs, orientation on the body, sign movements), comparing and contrasting with the phonology of their own language.
- Students compare formal and informal forms of language in greetings and leave-taking in American Sign Language and their own language.
- Students identify signs that are "borrowed" in American Sign Language and in their own language and speculate on reasons for "borrowing".

Progress Indicator: Year 2

- Students analyze syntactical and linguistic similarities and differences between American Sign Language and other languages (e.g., relationship between sign/word order and meaning, question format, verb inflections, time and tense indicators).
- Students demonstrate awareness of idioms and other figurative language within American Sign Language and compare them to idioms and other figurative language in their own language.
- Students demonstrate awareness of critical elements of American Sign Language that must be mastered to convey meaning.
- Students analyze relationships between word order and meaning in American Sign Language and their own language.

Progress Indicators, Year 3

- Students demonstrate differences between auditory languages and the visual/conceptual language of American Sign Language, including homophones.
- Students analyze comparisons and differences between literary genres of American Sign Language and their own language (e.g., poetry)
- Students compare and contrast conversation initiator and conversation resuming techniques between American Sign Language and their own language.
- Students demonstrate an awareness that there are phrases that do not translate directly from American Sign Language to their own language.
- Students study the evolution of American Sign Language (e.g., the role of French sign language, English print).

Standard 4.2 Students demonstrate the concept of culture through comparisons of Deaf culture with their own culture.

Progress Indicators: Year 1

- Students recognize the importance of affiliation and status within the Deaf community during introductions, in comparison with their own language.
- Students demonstrate an awareness of language register in American Sign Language, compared with their own language (e.g., name signs, degrees of formality).
- Students compare simple patterns of interaction in the Deaf culture and in their own culture.

Progress Indicators: Year 2

- Students compare and contrast the Deaf culture with other minority cultures.
- Students compare and contrast heroes and heroines in the Deaf community with heroes and heroines in their own community.

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- Students compare and contrast Deaf education and its history with education in other communities.
- Students demonstrate awareness that they too have a culture based on their comparisons between the Deaf culture and their own culture.

Progress Indicators, Year 3
- Students compare and contrast representatives of Deaf cultures and other cultures in a variety of literary genres.
- Students compare and contrast Deaf organizations and organizations of other cultures with respect to their political impact.
- Students compare and contrast how culture influences the idioms and nuances of meaning in American Sign Language and in their own language.
- Students analyze relationships between products, practices and perspectives in American Sign Language and the Deaf culture and in their own language and culture.

COMMUNITY: Participation in American Sign Language communities

Standard 5.1 Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.

Progress Indicators: Year 1
- Students identify deafness-related careers (e.g., Deaf education, interpreting/transliterating).
- Students present information about Deaf awareness and Deaf heritage.
- Students communicate on a personal level with American Sign Language users (e.g., E-mail, deaf pen-pals, subscription to Deaf-lists).
- Students attend school activities for the Deaf (e.g., Junior NAD/VAD, Deaf clubs).

Progress Indicators: Year 2
- Students expand their knowledge of career opportunities and limitations, with critical review of legislation affecting career choices and accommodations (e.g., the Americans with Disabilities Act).
- Students expand their knowledge of the sociology of deafness by describing diversity within the Deaf culture (e.g., deaf-black, deaf-blind, deaf peddlers).
- Students participate in and plan club activities that benefit the school or community (e.g., displays in the public library, debates, posters).
- Students interact with members of the local Deaf community (e.g., "Silent suppers," storytelling at libraries, leisure activities).
- Students attend events in the school or broader Deaf community.

Progress Indicators: Year 3
- Students analyze and discuss their personal experiences with deafness-related career opportunities and career opportunities for Deaf persons (e.g., by job shadowing an interpreter, interviewing Deaf professionals; studying Deaf artists, attending a Deaf church service).
- Students communicate with or interview members of the Deaf community on topics of personal interest, community, or world concern.
- Students perform, attend, or make a presentation on a culture or language topic.

Standard 5.2 Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

Progress Indicators: Year 1
- Students use the language for enjoyment (e.g., participate in finger-spelling games).
- Students attend or view media cultural events and social activities (e.g., attend or view a videotaped of a performance by the National Theater of the Deaf).

Progress Indicators: Year 2
- Students consult various sources in the language and exchange information around topics of personal interest.
- Students attend, view, create and/or perform on topic of interest to members of the Deaf community.

Progress Indicators: Year 3
- Students establish and or maintain interpersonal relations with the Deaf community (e.g., mentor young deaf children)
- Students participate in, attend, and create social activities with the Deaf community (e.g., plan an American Sign Language or Deaf Culture Fair, produce a play, sponsor Deaf humor or poster contests).

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Appendix B

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO LICENSURE REGULATIONS FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL
8VAC 20-21-10 et seq.

(Note: On June 22, 2000, the Virginia Board of Education opened a 60-day public comment period on these ASL teacher licensure requirements. As of this writing, they have not received final approval.)

FOREIGN LANGUAGE PREK-12 -- American Sign Language

Foreign language preK-12 -- American Sign Language

1. The program in American Sign Language will ensure that the candidate has:
   a. demonstrated the following competencies:
      (1) Understanding of native users of American Sign Language at a normal tempo;
      (2) Ability to sign with a command of vocabulary, nonmanual behaviors, and syntax adequate for expressing thoughts to an American Sign Language user not accustomed to dealing with non-American Sign Language users;
      (3) Knowledge of history, social structure and artistic and literary contributions of the Deaf culture;
      (4) Ability to interpret contemporary lifestyles, customs, and cultural patterns of the Deaf culture;
      (5) Understanding of the application of basic concepts of phonology (e.g., handshapes, types of signs, orientation on the body, sign movements), syntax, and morphology to the teaching of the American Sign Language;
      (6) Knowledge of the national standards for foreign language learning, current proficiency-based objectives of the teaching of foreign languages at the elementary and secondary levels, elementary and secondary methods and techniques for attaining these objectives, the assessment of foreign language skills, the use of media in teaching languages, current curricular developments, the relationship of language study to other areas of the curriculum, and the professional literature of foreign language teaching; and
      (7) Understanding of and proficiency in English grammar, usage, and mechanics and their integration in writing.
   b. Participation in opportunities for significant study of the linguistics of American Sign Language and immersion experiences in the Deaf culture.

2. Endorsement requirements. The candidate must have:
   a. Graduated from an approved teacher preparation program in a foreign language--American Sign Language; or
   b. Completed a major in American Sign Language or 24 semester hours above the intermediate level in American Sign Language. The program shall include (i) courses in advanced grammar and syntax, conversation, and culture and (ii) a minimum of 3 semester hours of methods of teaching foreign languages at the elementary and secondary levels; or
   c. Native users or candidates who have learned American Sign Language without formal academic credit in a college or university must complete the following requirements:
      (1) Competency in American Sign Language demonstrated by written documentation of one of the following:
         (a) hold a current, valid Qualified or Professional certification by the American Sign Language Teachers Association;
         (b) hold a current, valid Virginia Quality Assurance Screening Level III Interpreting or higher issued by the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing;

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(c) hold a current, valid Registry of Interpreters for Deaf certification in at least one of the following: Certificate of Interpretation (CI), Certificate of Deaf Interpretation (CDI), Reverse Skills Certification (RSC), or Comprehensive Skills Certificate (CSC);

(d) hold a current, valid National Association for the Deaf Level IV or higher

(2) Earned a minimum of 3 semester hours of methods of teaching foreign languages at the elementary and secondary levels from an accredited college or university in the United States.

It is recommended that individuals who are serving as teachers of American Sign Language in a public or accredited nonpublic school who hold a current, valid Virginia teaching license (Collegiate Professional or Postgraduate Professional License) be given a period of two years within the effective date of these regulations to meet the requirements for the endorsement in American Sign Language.